

of the recording secretary, but will enable us to have more accurate reports of the meetings for publication.

In concluding my preliminary remarks, I can only express the wish that during the coming session the interest heretofore taken in the meetings of the Pathological Society may be maintained, and that, as in the past, we may spend a pleasant and profitable time together.

For a short time this evening, I propose to discuss Pathology in its relation to medical practice. This suggested itself to me as a suitable subject, in view of the fact that the membership of the society is composed largely of men who are interested in pathology for its direct bearing on clinical work—for its assistance in the diagnosis, prognosis and scientific treatment of disease.

I also considered it suitable because, even at this late date, there are men in our profession who have no appreciation of the importance of pathology to the clinician—who speak of it as a subject suited to the amusement of the enthusiastic theorizer, but of little use in the field of practical medicine.

These same men, relying upon that cloak for so much ignorance which they affect to call *experience*, will dispute learnedly as to whether a given case is one of consumption or bronchitis, diphtheria or tonsillitis, malaria or typhoid fever, forgetful or unaware of the fact that a comparatively simple examination could place the matter beyond all dispute. Remarkable as it may seem, we all know that such medical Rip Van Winkles actually exist.

One of the greatest benefits pathology has conferred on practical medicine has been to give us an intelligent conception of what is implied by the term—"disease." For centuries and even up unto comparatively late times, not only among the laity, but in the profession itself, a superstitious haze surrounded the idea of disease, attributing its phenomena to a direct visitation of Providence or to the arbitrary workings of supernatural agencies.

As evidence of the lack of any clear insight into the true nature of disease, we need only recall the various fantastic theories, which from time to time were advanced to explain it, and the equally ridiculous—and irrational to us—systems of treatment that were brought forward. So long as men's minds were continually directed to the supernatural, rather than to their own surroundings, for the explanation of the incidence of disease, it was not to be expected that any progress could be made in etiology and consequently none in rational therapeutics. It was almost a religious act to submit with unquestioning faith to what was deemed the will of God. Even yet, showing the vitality